

signed, in 1963, was an act to create community mental health centers. And the idea was to close, at that time, what they called asylums and give people community care; care close to home, families, support people; to be able to be in the community and be successful. Well, the hospitals got closed, but the rest of it never happened.

So I am so honored to have partnered, and want to continue to partner, with ROY as he leaves here for other things, to move forward the rest of the story, which is effective community care for folks, not in a jail, not in an emergency department, but in the community, with their family, allowing them to be successful and work and living their lives because they are getting the care that they need. So I am very honored to have had the opportunity to work with ROY on that as well.

Now, Senator WICKER was talking, and I thought he might have said something about the trip that we took together to Asia with Senator BLUNT. Senator BLUNT was wonderful at putting together bipartisan trips, and we had the opportunity to go to a number of places in Australia because part of everything else that he does is that he has been one of the leaders in an inter-parliamentary partnership with the United States of America and Australia. And I was pleased, I think last year, to see you receive a very significant honor here because of your work.

But we had an opportunity to travel together with Abby and for all of us to be together and really show a bipartisan front to other world leaders.

I will say as an aside that you never want to play cards with him because he is a very good card player, and I have often said that I think he counts cards because he is so good.

On a serious note, I really am going to miss this gentleman from Missouri. I am proud to have him as a friend, as a partner, and someone who really exemplifies what it means to be a statesman, to be a public servant.

And I just send you all my best and all my love for you and your family.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. I ask unanimous consent that Senator COLLINS, Senator INHOFE, and I be allowed to give our remarks before the next vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, as we see, this is that difficult time of the year when we pause and say goodbye, farewell, and Godspeed to departing Members of this body.

Senator COLLINS and I are prepared to act as a team at this moment to wish the very best and pay tribute to two individuals, RICHARD SHELBY of Alabama and JIM INHOFE of Oklahoma.

TRIBUTE TO RICHARD SHELBY

Senator SHELBY is a gifted legislator and a southern gentleman whose impact on this Nation will not soon be

forgotten. His colleagues and constituents know him for his long record of championing economic development and as a champion in the House of Representatives and in the Senate for our military, as leader of the Appropriations Committee here in the Senate.

RICHARD SHELBY is the quintessential problem-solver. He has always known how to sit down, negotiate, and get a result, and I wish him the best in this final month of his career in once again getting a result.

Indeed, the jobs created through RICHARD SHELBY's legislation and committee work number in the hundreds of thousands—the hundreds of thousands of jobs.

So it is no surprise that there are now monuments to RICHARD SHELBY's leadership all over Alabama and the entire Nation. As his next door neighbors across the State line, we Mississippians have directly benefited from his leadership.

So I wish him and his wife Annette well as they begin the next chapter.

TRIBUTE TO JAMES M. INHOFE

Madam President, now I turn to my friend the senior Senator from Oklahoma, JIM INHOFE, a man who I have had the privilege of working with on the Armed Services Committee these last 14 years.

Senator INHOFE represented Oklahoma for 28 years in this body and 6 years before that in the House of Representatives. In all of those years, he could always be counted on to attend every single Wednesday morning Prayer Breakfast and Thursday Bible study. One time, he had to attend by telephone because he was called away by a family crisis. But we could always count on him.

He has been a close friend on both sides of the aisle to people like Barbara Boxer of California, JACK REED of Rhode Island, BERNIE SANDERS of Vermont, and Democratic Leader Harry Reid. Perhaps it was those friendships that explained his mountain of legislative success, with bipartisan achievements that include three highway bills, four Water Resources and Development Acts, seven National Defense Authorization Acts, including the current bill pending before this body—a bill which literally bears his name.

But that success also came from his breadth-of-life experience. He understood how to create jobs because, he himself, had done that as a businessman for 30 years, working in aviation, real estate, and insurance. He understood the challenges of local government because he had been the mayor of Tulsa and a State legislator. As a leader on the Armed Services Committee, he could speak for our men and women in uniform because he had been one of them, having served in the Army.

As a personal friend of Ronald Reagan, he never wavered in advocating for peace through strength. Oklahoma's five military bases are unquestionably better off today because

of their staunch advocate, Senator JIM INHOFE.

Thanks to his leadership, veterans have better facilities, our Air Force is better equipped, and the military now has AFRICOM as a distinct mission on the African continent. It bears saying that Senator INHOFE has a long-standing affection for Africa and the people of Africa. There is no one in Congress—or in the State Department, for that matter—who can surpass his personal knowledge of African leaders.

On a typical congressional delegation trip, he would hit an average of 12 countries in 10 days, covering 18,000 miles and meeting with civilian and military leaders at every stop, always looking for an opportunity to pray with them, always visiting American troops.

He has been to Africa more times than any Member of Congress since America's founding—172 visits on the African continent.

When he isn't making law or traveling the globe or watching his grandsons' athletic events, there is a good chance he is in the air somewhere flying a Cessna because Senator INHOFE is also Pilot INHOFE, with nearly 12,000 hours of flight time, including a solo flight around the world.

He will also be remembered for that 1991 trip in which he flew the flight path of Wiley Post, which went straight through Russian airspace. His Russian escort pilot even remarked on his outstanding piloting skills.

As JIM INHOFE departs this Chamber, he leaves behind a wealth of friends and an army of former staff whose talent and loyalty are a testament to the man himself.

I know he will look forward to spending more time with his wife of 63 years, Kay, and his 20 grandchildren and—his 20 children and grandchildren.

Both of these gentlemen, both of these friends, JIM INHOFE and RICHARD SHELBY, will go down as titans of the Senate. Their enormous contributions to the good of our Nation will not soon be forgotten, and we will miss their company.

I wish them both farewell and Godspeed.

And now I yield to my friend, the Senator from Maine, Ms. COLLINS, for her remarks about these two outstanding friends.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, what a pleasure it is to join Senator WICKER in paying tribute to our dear friends and outstanding colleagues, Senators JIM INHOFE and RICHARD SHELBY.

We could talk about their accomplishments on the floor for many, many hours, but in the interest of time, we are going to focus—as has my colleague from Mississippi—on their truly outstanding contributions to our national security.

Their unwavering commitment to the security of our Nation and the well-being of our servicemembers has been truly remarkable.